

SOME CIRSIUM OBSERVATIONS

by William Millar

A fictional polemic in six parts

*'Canyons of flats,
stacked caves...'*

- Michael Johnfine, *Walking Comely*

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“What a fucking godawful, backward-looking dirge, *‘Flower of Scotland’* is. If we can’t do better than that, we don’t deserve to be independent.”

– Herwick Dun, Professor of Urban Studies, UCS (University of Central Scotland)

THE SHITEBRICK OF DESTINY

The Shitebrick of Destiny is a mythical Scottish item, the subject of much rumour, speculation and exploratory archaeological activity. According to the Book of Knobster (third century AD) it is made of the rare mineral, ayerite, and of an unknown age though certainly ancient.

It is said to have calcified when it fell out of God’s arse thence onto Saint Bannock’s head, waking him (Bannock) from the dark slumber which afflicts all of humankind. It was an epiphanic event for the young man. It gave him quite a start and much pause for thought even though he seems to have lost the fantastic object soon after his special moment. That, of course was when he was just plain Bannock Flaithebraidh before he came to the island of Steepit and founded his prophetic order. His canonisation came much later.

Various imaginative manifestations of the Shitebrick have been created by artists over the years. One of the most popular is the rhombic dodecahedron by the sculptor, Launder Panty. Made of clay dug from a small deposit adjacent to the Moniefust mudflats, its coloured facets represent the hues of the various algae still found only on the coastal rocks of Steepit.

Margred Pauchle's crystal and MDF hanging is also well thought of though, like Panty's sculpture, is entirely speculative as to the shape and form of the original which of course has never been seen. Saint Bannock left no information on that though plenty on its alleged properties.

Perhaps the most important of those is that which states, *'Plack eet oan ay hudstup whaun ay whinbag stotes moomlappity. Goate ay rechty faur ay windroose ferkit an aw be streemster, narsfit greemit dabsts.'*

The historian, Arthur Gudd, who has made a lifetime's study of the Book of Knobster, has translated this to mean, roughly, that the Shitebrick of Destiny has the same sort of potency as the Ark of the Covenant and that it's prudent to wear heavy duty gauntlets when handling it.

Certainly, the governing Scottish Zealocratic Party continues, covertly, to spend significant amounts of time and money trying to find the object as the SZP's ruling apparatchiks believe it would give them the power they need to turn their party's jeopardous phantasies into reality, thus completing their master plan for dominion over the gullible.

SZP leader and Scotland's Chief Minister, Bella Snagnose, and her Deputy Chief Minister, Calvin Purselip, are both understood to be members of the related but clandestine society, Guardians of the Shite Pan. GOSPs meet once a year at undisclosed locations where they dip themselves in butts of water drawn from the River Clarty, smear themselves with oatmeal, then dance to reels specially composed for the occasion by the legendary Scottish folk band, Fuckoffity.

Societally, Scotland breaks down largely into those who are of the GOSP mentality and those who are not.

Among known non-GOSPs is the film maker, Manton Spellar. He is believed to be working currently on a treatment for a film, '*Culloden II*', described by one insider as, '*Back to the Future*' meets '*Braveheart*' meets '*The Magnificent Seven*' meets some blokes in plaids on a bog, in which a group of seven military and intelligence experts go back in time and get involved in the Battle of Culloden.

In the meantime the search for the Shitebrick of Destiny continues. Similar searches have been taking place for comparable items in other countries for almost as long as humankind has walked the earth. None has ever been found.

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“What really pisses me off is being called a Tory just because I don’t support the Scottish Zealocrats. Anyone calling me a Tory’s likely to get a hard punch in the face.”

– Kyle Eck, Scottish Secretary, NUSSLB (National Union of Salmon Smokers and Lobster Boilers)

THE ENTREPRENEUR

It is still officially called, ‘Island of the Rock which fell on the Head of Angus’, or in Gaelic, Eilean na creige a thuit air ceann Aonghais.

But now most people just refer to it as ‘Rabbit Rock’.

If you take a map of the Hebrides and draw a triangle between Coll, Barra and Rum, you will find it nestling roughly in the triangle’s centre, three miles long and around half a mile wide.

It is a rocky, semi-fertile island with a few wind-bent trees and average ground cover.

No one knows how it became a haven for *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, the European rabbit, or how those first rabbits arrived. It’s generally believed some mischievous yachtsmen released a few in the first half of the twentieth century, but none can say for certain. Now, however, they number in the thousands. Birds of prey make no discernible dent in the size of the population and there are no other predators apart from man. And God help whoever takes the life of one of the ‘liddle fluffikins’ which are responsible for what has, over the years, become one of the Hebrides’ and indeed the country’s biggest tourist attractions.

This money-spinning phenomenon is due to the actions of the late Hector McGregor, from Kilchoan on the Ardnamurchan peninsula. He and his friend, Charlie Mclean from Arinagour on the island of Coll, were on a fishing trip when they anchored in Eilean na creige a thuit air ceann Aonghais's only decent, sheltered bay while Charlie fixed a flooded engine.

With nothing else to do, Hector took the boat's dinghy and rowed ashore to the rarely visited island. He was astonished at the number of rabbits. That was when had his Eureka moment, the result being 'Hector's Nuts', '...the best rabbit food for a hundred miles'. They were not made of nuts of course but comprised small, round balls, a compressed mix of grass and oat hay – a lot of oats are grown in Scotland – and a good pinch of sawdust. Hector reckoned if he could get visitors coming to the island, he could sell them bags of bunny food to take with them. A fortune awaited, he believed.

'*"It's rabbit nectar"*, says Hector', became his advertising catchphrase accompanied by an ear-worming jingle that became notorious throughout the country, resulting in a number of television sets being damaged beyond repair.

But we're jumping ahead. Hector said nothing of his then vision to anyone initially, not even Charlie. Instead he paid a discreet visit to Sir Auchline Banderlonie, full christened name, Auchline Gustavo McPraline Dunderballs Hootering Banderlonie, titular head of the Banderlonie clan and owner of the island.

After a short negotiation, Hector secured a 100-year lease to the island on terms that allowed him to do with it pretty much as he wanted. Sir Auchline, knowing nothing of the pulling power of the common cony, allowed himself an extra large glass of Peatbane single malt after

his venison cutlets that evening, thinking McGregor a fool and happy to have parted him from some of his money.

Hector, on the other hand regarded Sir Auchline as the product of continuous inbreeding. He had their agreement notarised first thing the following morning.

He also knew that Charlie could do with augmenting his income and within the week had made an agreement with his friend to be the provider of official transport, running trips out of Kilchoan on his boat, the now renamed 'Rabbit Rocker'.

The business was beginning to take shape though there were still a number of hurdles to jump. But Hector McGregor on a mission, with a gleam in his eye and a pot of money beckoning, was not a man to be waylaid easily. He also knew his way round a government grant application, particularly when the government concerned was generous to minorities who spoke an obscure language and lived in depopulated areas which, during the summer and autumn tourist seasons were infested with savage, biting flies.

And so, with a nod to the prevalent Scottish Zealocratic Party and its economic development arm, small booths, rather like ticket offices with SZP branding on one side and Highlands and Islands Enterprise on the other, sprang up around local ports and coastal villages, including Castlebay, Lochboisdale, Kilchoan, Salen, Strontian, Lochaline, Tobermory, Craginure, Arinagour, Scarinish and, for the forgetful visitor, on Rabbit Rock itself.

In due course, many others were added, and ticket franchises were negotiated with pubs, hotels and fish and chip shops up and down the country, from Inverary to Fort William,

Ullapool to Thurso, Nairn to Dundee, Kirkcaldy to Dumfries and anywhere else Hector could think of including all the tartan tat shops that long ago proliferated on every High Street in Scotland.

Business was slow at first while the bunnies became used to visitors with their seemingly endless supplies of tasty ‘nuts’. But once word spread, especially via social media, it grew even more quickly than Hector had hoped.

Charlie was given control of the Rabbit Rock ferry franchisees who paid him an annual fee for their licences. Otherwise, all ticket money went to Hector.

He diversified and expanded. He encouraged visitors to adopt a bunny, provide it with a name and, once they had made their visit, converse with it via the website he created, www.rabbitrock.sco from which the rabbits responded by email. The bunny correspondence arm of the business was run by his niece, Janet, only progeny of his feckless brother, Donnie and Donnie’s equally feckless wife, Christina, and to whom, like all of those he employed, he granted the option of purchasing non-voting shares in the company. They bought them in droves except for Hector’s wife, Crabainthe, who disapproved of the entire enterprise as not fit work for a grown man.

“This isn’t fit work for a grown man,” she would say most mornings over their breakfast of porridge and high protein wheaty bites. “And you never liked animals.”

“Ach, away and tend to your seaweed.”

Crabainthe owned a small, seaweed face cream manufacturing operation – it used extract of dulse and kelp mainly – which mixed its products in the old byre behind the post office which she also managed. She was an entrepreneur in her own right.

She and her husband had no children.

Hector's call centre in Fort William was largely funded by further generous employment grants and he was eventually awarded the title, 'Business Mannie of the Year', receiving a piece of pointy perspex with his name on it from Bella Snagnose, leader of the Scottish Zealocrats, at an awards ceremony in Inverness. He was also the first person ever to receive the 'Freedom of Ardslygnish', which is where he was actually born before the family moved a few miles west along the coast to Kilchoan.

He created intellectual property rights over a great swathe of merchandise in the form of badges, (metallic, plastic and fabric), photographs and posters, dish towels, maps, RR (Rabbit Rock) shortbread, RR honey and various jams, a vast variety of sweets, mugs, pens, pencils, erasers, notepads, fluffy rabbit toys of all kinds along with plastic rabbit pellets for authenticity, t-shirts, branded sticking plasters, midge repellents, cheap watches, sunglasses, keyrings, DVDs, gloves, hats and anything else his fertile mind could think of, though he was careful never, ever to offer lucky rabbit feet.

He branded his merchandise in old Norse, ancient Welsh, Gaelic, Scots, English and Pictish (at least, what he thought *might* be Pictish since no one could tell him for certain), giving the nod to most of the languages that had been spoken in different parts of Scotland at one time or another, and increasing the opportunity for multiple sales.

It was said he increased the size of the west highland economy by three hundred percent in the space of just a few years. It hadn't been big to start with, but the statistic pleased the Government's public relations oiks.

He had a contentious argument with Rolls Royce about the RR symbol, but changing the font to Brush Script MT and the brand name to RabRo, (*RabRo*) solved the problem.

He also ignored the Japanese who claimed he stole the idea from their Okunoshima 'Rabbit' Island.

Over the years, 'Rabbitteers' became serious competitors to Scouts and Guides. However, the 'Conyceans', a small but extreme religious sect founded some years after Rabbit Rock became a household name, were banned by Act of Parliament after they were caught offering rabbits up for ritual sacrifice. At the time of writing they are appealing the judgment.

Having realised how much money he might have made if he'd understood the affection in which the stupid bunny is held by most equally stupid humans, Sir Auchline Banderlonie tried to renegotiate the terms of the original access agreement. But Hector was having none of it and eventually instigated the community buyout of Banderlonie's west highland estate. Sir Auchline took his money and moved to Virgin Gorda, one of the British Virgin Islands where, on a much smaller offshore island, he tried to emulate Hector's idea using lizards, but without success.

Hector did not become one of the world's multi-billionaires, but he did become seriously rich and was regarded as an important entrepreneur. He was invited to stay on Necker Island by Richard Branson and was feted by the CBI, the IoD, the Freemasons, the National Trust of Scotland, Tourist Boards of every hue, the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Unencumbered Church of the Hairy Oobit, the Church of Scientology, the Scotch Whisky Association, the Saltire Society, and certain unorthodox neo pagan groups to name only a few. He turned down the opportunity to become a Knight of the Gristle. Eventually, he handed the reins of the business to Janet who had not inherited her parents' shiftless attitudes. He travelled the world lecturing on business start-ups having been given a number of honorary professorships at various business schools and universities.

Yet he was never truly happy and, as the years progressed, he became gloomier and gloomier. Crabainthe had left him many years previously and moved to the flat above the Post Office. It had not bothered him then and did not now. That was not the reason for his ennui.

"What's up, chum?" said Charlie, one morning via his satellite phone, in reply to yet another of Hector's increasingly frequent calls. Charlie was now married to a twenty-four year-old pole dancer from Stornoway called Morag, and lived in three converted and conjoined crofts in Morvern overlooking the Sound of Mull.

He had sold his interest in the Rabbit Rock ferry franchises some years previously and founded the Tobermory Art Biennale where he always exhibited his own sculptures, made from the rusting cars and tractors which can be found lying around in corners of most of the inner and outer western isles. Charlie's sculptures now feature in many major art galleries.

“I don’t know,” said Hector. “I just feel I took the easy option, you know. That it all means nothing.”

“Och, come on, Hector. You have everything – Morag, stop that – you could possibly want.”

“Do I Charlie? Do I?”

“ ’Course you do. Where’re you calling from, anyway?”

“Palmerston Island. It’s in the south Pacific. Pretty remote. There’s only about sixty people on it, most of them descended from an English bloke called Marsters.”

“For God’s sake, man. You should be in Monaco or somewhere, living it up.”

“Tried that.”

“And...”

“It palls.”

“I haven’t found that to be the case.”

“D’you remember old Steinboots?” said Hector.

“How could I forget.”

Anders Stein had been the head of the art department in their old secondary school. He had used the tawse regularly with neither fear nor favour. But he had also been a most conscientious teacher with an eye for talent.

“And d’you remember he recommended I should specialise in art but my parents said no?”

“For God’s sake, Hector. You’re not still going on about that?”

“I should have done it, Charlie. And I should have let the rabbits be.”

“I don’t remember you saying that when we celebrated the one millionth visitor and got drunk as skunks.”

“Aye, well, nonetheless.”

“Come off it, Hector. Morag, will you...look, put that spurtle down...Morag, I’m telling you...stop...Mo...Hector I’m going to have to go. Call me later. Call me tonight, Hector. Will you?”

“Aye, right Charlie. ’Bye now.”

A couple of days later, Hector was found floating in Palmerston Island's lagoon. His body was half eaten. A tiger shark had been spotted a couple of days earlier and was thought to be the culprit.

A large box of oil paints, some tubes open, was found in Hector's room along with some half-finished paintings.

"Wasn't much of an artist, was he?" the person who packed up his effects for forwarding, was heard to say.

"That shade of blue's all wrong."



“Yes okay, we won a fight seven hundred years ago, though it certainly wasn’t fought for the benefit of the average citizen. But so what? We’ve lost plenty since then, too. When, for God’s sake, will we ever learn to stop looking backwards and start looking forwards?”

– Beryl Mundie-Macdonald, historian and author

MANTON SPELLAR’S FILM TREATMENT (Sort of)

LOGLINE

Culloden II

Nearly three hundred years after the last pitched battle fought on British soil, the infamous Battle of Culloden, a small group of specialist military and intelligence personnel take an involuntary journey back to that time where they will change the outcome of the battle and thus the course of history.

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TREATMENT

The end of an abortive Jacobite attempt to overthrow the House of Hanover and restore the House of Stuart to the British throne occurred on Saturday 16th April, 1746, on Drumossie Moor near the village of Culloden in northern Scotland.

In not much more than an hour, the forces of Prince Charles Edward Louis John Casimir Sylvester Severino Maria Stuart, aka 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', the Italian-born, half-Polish, young pretender to the throne of Great Britain, a Jacobite, strategically incompetent and a believer in the absurd notion of the divine right of kings, were decisively beaten by those of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, aka 'Butcher Billy', son of the German-born, George II, King of Great Britain and Ireland, Prince-electoral of the Holy Roman Empire and another believer in divine monarchical rights. The brutal aftermath of the battle and the years of harsh repression that followed, hastened the end of the regressive feudality that had dominated life in the Highlands for hundreds of years.

Nearly three hundred years later, a small team of specialised military and intelligence personnel sets out from Prestwick Airport in Scotland for Norway to attend an international conference on terrorism.

The team comprises, SAS Mountain Troop Major Bennet Dunbar, a Scot; his sergeant, Gerry Rinaldi, of Scots-Italian origin; Colonel Jed (Jedburgh) McEchearn, a black, American, Gaelic-speaking special forces officer, (his forebears include a Scots plantation owner and one of the owner's black, female slaves); Capitaine Marc le Cheminant of the French Foreign Legion 'Pathfinder' troop; Katsuo Minamoto, the equivalent of a Colour Sergeant Major in the Japanese Special Forces Group, Tokushusakusengun, often referred to as Japan's Delta Force; Forozan Foley, a female senior Intelligence Officer in MI6, (Iranian mother, Irish father) and Lieutenant Mick Underwood from the north of England, an officer in the Army's recently created Cyber Corps. All are highly skilled, armed and dangerous, particularly Minamoto who, in addition to other weapons, carries a 'katana' (sword) with which he is an adept. McEchearn is the senior officer, though he exercises his authority lightly.

They set off from Prestwick in poor weather in a long range helicopter. As they head north-east across the Grampian Mountains and then towards the Moray Firth, the weather deteriorates and they fly into a severe thunderstorm. There is a small electrical explosion in the helicopter cockpit. The pilots are concerned about potential systems failures and decide on an emergency descent. They land on Drumossie Moor, site of the Battle of Culloden.

It is now dark. In spite of the weather, the pilots insist all other personnel disembark as the helicopter's environment may be unsafe. While damage assessment continues, the team exits.

Unknown to them, there is a small fissure in the ground near where they are grouped. As they check their immediate environment, Rinaldi falls through it into what seems like an old tomb. He calls to the others.

At that point the helicopter is struck by a bolt of lightning and bursts into flames. Nothing can be done for the pilots. As more lightning bolts strike the ground around them, the remainder of the team jump down into the underground chamber.

They discover a stone sarcophagus covered with curious inscriptions in an unknown language. It bears some resemblance to Pictish. The storm continues to rage above them. Dunbar tries to make contact with his base but cannot find a signal. Nor can any of the others. They decide to bed down in their underground shelter until morning when the storm might have passed over.

As they are settling down, Underwood notices the strange lettering on one side of the sarcophagus seems to glow momentarily. But he then dismisses it as the reflection of a lightning flash from above. They sleep.

In the morning, on exiting the chamber all seems calm after the previous night's storm and the sun is shining fitfully through clouds. But there is no sign of the helicopter. No one can explain its disappearance. And there is still no signal on anyone's communication equipment.

In spite of their concerns they head east towards Inverness, reasoning they should quickly come across a road and perhaps, more importantly reach an area where they might find a signal. Underwood leaves a device hidden in the heather around the small fissure. It is powered by military grade, long-life batteries and is not reliant on satellites. With another small piece of equipment he can stay in touch with it. By this means they should always be able to pinpoint where they crash-landed.

A short time later, as they breast a low rise they come across some of the Jacobite army spread out on the moor ahead of them. These forerunners and pickets had made their appearance earlier that day, 14th April, prior to the arrival of the main force on the 15th.

The team members think they have come across some film extras waiting for their scene. But then they notice there are no other signs of a film being made, no equipment, no transport or catering facilities and no other personnel. It is then Foley remarks that it's also very odd not to have seen a single telegraph pole or electricity pylon on their way there. They drop down

and look around in consternation before coming to the conclusion they have travelled back in time.

As they try to absorb what has happened, a small band of riders appears, led by a striking woman. She is the Jacobite, 'la belle rebelle', Lady Anne Mackintosh. The riders wheel round on seeing the strange group and demand to know who they are and where they are from.

Various heated conversations take place. When one of the Jacobite group threatens violence, le Cheminant fires warning shots blasting a nearby dead tree into wood chip. Lady Anne and her companions are astonished at the destructive power of the weaponry. Eventually, once it is accepted that the seven mean no harm, she insists they all join her at her home, Moy Hall, only a few miles south of Inverness.

On arrival, they find Lord George Murray, Lieutenant General of the Jacobite army, with some followers. He has come to establish whether Lady Anne will be able to send any further troops. Murray had already argued against Drumossie Moor as a battle site but was overruled by his leader, Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

He is now doubly furious with the Prince who is intent on positioning his Jacobite forces for battle in a manner also contrary to his Lieutenant General's advice. Murray rails against Sir John O'Sullivan, an Irishman and another of the Prince's advisers and to whom, for reasons that escape him (Murray), the Jacobite leader always seems to listen.

Meeting the team, Murray is incredulous initially but is persuaded by Lady Anne. Further demonstrations of the team's weaponry also help convince him. At this point McEcheon reveals he has studied the Battle of Culloden and confirms Murray is right about the poor positioning of the Jacobite army. He also gives hints about what transpired in the original battle.

Murray becomes even more concerned. He and Lady Anne are now desperate that the newcomers join forces with the Jacobites. The team members argue among themselves about what they should do. Underwood in particular is vehemently opposed to their interfering in events which would alter history. In view of the almost genocidal slaughter that is known to have occurred after the original battle, Dunbar and McEcheon however are not so sure. The remainder are of mixed mind. A compromise is established and all finally agree to be 'observers'. But it is an uneasy agreement and we are left unclear as to exactly how each of the group will interpret 'observation'.

Murray prepares to leave. Foley asks to go with him, wishing to see the nature of the leader's camp. He agrees. There is clearly an attraction between these two. They depart together. The rest stooze around Moy Hall, eating and talking with their hosts.

The next day, 15th, we find le Cheminant intrigued by the whisky distilling taking place behind the main house. As his own family has been producing fine cognac for generations, he gives Alasdair McGillivray, the local 'distiller' new insights into the distilling process.

Minamoto who is the subject of much interest by the inhabitants of Moy Hall, is encouraged to dress in various tartan* garments which he displays proudly to the others. A tartan Samurai warrior.

Perhaps the person of most interest to all the locals, is McEchearn, not only because he is black, a rarity but also, as they discover, he can speak Scots Gaelic. This causes delight and amazement in equal measures.

Dunbar, Rinaldi and Underwood spend much of the day considering the conflict to come and how members of the team might best be placed in order to conduct their 'observations'. They have borrowed a book of Scottish battles, including 'Culloden', from McEchearn.

They consult with the others, though not Foley as she has yet to return, and decide the following: McEchearn will remain in the walled area known as Culloden Parks to the north west of the Jacobite lines, under cover with Underwood. Minamoto and le Cheminant will conceal themselves behind the stone walls in the area known as the Culwhiniac enclosure, south east of the main battle area and between the two opposing armies. Dunbar and Rinaldi will adopt covert, roving roles. No decision can be taken about Foley until she returns.

That night, Dunbar and Rinaldi sneak out under cover of darkness and spike a number of Cumberland's cannon, the same cannon which caused such devastation to the Jacobite army in the original battle. This, as Dunbar puts it, 'will help even things up a little.'

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It is the day of the Battle of Culloden. The respective armies proceed to take up their positions.

As they do so, Cumberland's cavalry sets off for the Culwhiniac enclosure. On reaching it, they come across le Cheminant and Minamoto, spotting the Japanese first as he is still dressed in the tartan cloth to which he has taken such a liking. The cavalymen attack them but they stand little chance against modern automatic weapons. Those who are not immediately killed or wounded are dismounted, and this remaining group approaches Minamoto with their sabres drawn. Drawing his katana, the Japanese waves le Cheminant back. He then proceeds to slaughter them all.

The pitiful collection of Jacobite cannons open fire. Cumberland's cannons respond instantly. But a number of them blow up, thanks to Dunbar and Rinaldi's activities the previous evening. In spite of the fear and confusion this causes, to say nothing of the deaths, the remainder of the cannons continue to fire. But they are far less effective.

McEchearn kills the Duke of Cumberland with a long range shot. He had privately decided he would do this without informing any of the others. From his studies of military history, he has come to detest Cumberland and is not prepared to allow the Duke the pleasure of ordering his men to carry out post-battle mass murder, particularly as some of those killed might conceivably have been among his Scottish ancestors. When Cumberland's commanding officer, the notoriously brutal Lieutenant General, Henry 'Hangman' Hawley appears in his sights, McEchearn shoots him, too.

Underwood protests strongly to McEchearn about changing the course of history, but the American points out that just by their presence, and especially having met Mackintosh, Murray and others, history has already been altered whether Underwood likes it or not. Underwood storms off.

Shortly after Cumberland's death, a bouncing cannonball veers off course, hitting and killing Prince Charles Edward Stuart's incompetent Irish adviser, Sir John O'Sullivan. In turn he and his horse fall into The Prince's horse which topples its rider to the ground breaking Charles Edward Stuart's neck. The Irishman has performed his last disservice to the Jacobite leader.

Underwood finds himself attacked by someone he discovers is one of his own forebears, Corporal George Underwood. A small cameo which he recognises as one which sits on a table in his grandmother's home, falls from one of the pockets of his attacker. If he kills his foe, then he (Underwood) will not exist, so he has to disable the other man, probably by knocking him out but certainly without causing his death. After a hard struggle, he achieves his aim.

Dunbar and Rinaldi find themselves in a firefight which, naturally, they win thanks to their vastly superior weapons, though not without some difficulty when Rinaldi is injured, non-lethally by a musket ball. Dunbar tells him to look on the bright side as it is a unique injury which no other modern soldier is ever likely to receive.

Lord George Murray is undecided on a course of action. On the one hand, he is not the type of man to flee a battle. On the other, his leader is dead and the Jacobite cause lost. Foley,

who is still with him suggests delicately that perhaps caution might be the better part of valour.

The decision is taken for him. For with Prince Charles Edward Stuart and the Duke of Cumberland both dead and exaggerated rumours spreading across the battlefield of terrifying warriors wreaking havoc, uncertainty reigns. Leadership and order are breaking down and many now seek to slip the field and save themselves.

As a result, the conflict comes to a stuttering halt, the outcome undecided. Word spreads that both Prince Charles and the Duke of Cumberland are dead and the Jacobite army decides enough is enough. Many of the highlanders never wanted to fight anyway, having been coerced into doing so by their clan chiefs or other landlords such as the very same Lady Anne Mackintosh.

The action ends indecisively and the infamous post-battle slaughter never happens. The armies break off and withdraw from each other. The highlanders, still waving their broadswords and uttering their fierce war cries seem to retreat more slowly than the government troops who edge backwards still aiming their Brown Bess muskets toward their opponents. But no matter the speed of separation, the two sides do disengage.

Underwood now returns to McEchearn, informing him they must leave the battlefield as the device left at the fissure is sending increasingly powerful signals. He is concerned that if they do not return to the underground chamber quickly, they may never get back to their own time. Dunbar and Rinaldi join them along with Minamoto and le Cheminant. Foley rides up with Lord George Murray.

Murray informs them he has no idea what, precisely they have done but that they may have saved the Jacobite army from a terrible defeat. Dunbar tells him, fairly abruptly, that he is correct though only history will tell whether they have done the right thing.

Lady Anne rides up and invites them all back to Moy Hall for dinner. But they decline, McEchearn explaining that they must leave if they are to have any chance of returning home. Foley and Murray have a private word then, after a brief embrace she rejoins the other team members. They all leave, jogging hard and heading east.

They reach the tomb once more and slip down into it, through the fissure. The letters on the sarcophagus are glowing brightly as if an electric current is running through them. The brightness become almost unbearable before it fades and they are left in darkness. They're utterly exhausted and fall to the ground where they seem to sleep.

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When they wake they are not on the spot where their helicopter crash landed, but on a hillside somewhere near Aultnabreac in the far north east of the country. An elderly, bearded man in a tweed suit is leaning against a cairn, observing them.

He tells them it's about time they were awake and imagines they have had an 'interesting' few days.

Dunbar demands to know who he is and where they are.

The man tells them his name is Connery, Arthur Connery, and that he is Professor of Physics and Astro-history at Thurso University. He also tells them they are in Caithness and that he has been waiting for them.

Just then, a bullet train speeds past near the base of the hill.

Connery informs them it is the 'Kirkwall Flyer' and that it is never late.

Minamoto says it reminds him of home.

At that point, the professor dissolves in front of them and disappears. At the same time, the sky darkens and thousands of stars appear.

A huge, tartan moon floats across their vision followed by the sound of an invisible choir singing the mesmerising, '*song of neverendums*'.

Among other things the song lyrics promise a land of cancer-free cigarettes, non-addictive heroin, inexhaustible oil supplies, permanent presidency of OPEC, NATO, the EU and the UN Security Council, a permanent supply of spare livers, a vice-like hold on the football world cup, teleportation, free scotch pies for all (vegan options available), a land where it only rains at night, the sun shines all day, tourists *never* visit, pockets are full of gold and *Culicoides impunctatus*, aka the highland midge, has become extinct.

Our seven companions gape, open-mouthed, like children watching their first illusionist.

Voiceover:

And they're there yet, still as stone, if only you can find the hill.

That won't be a problem, though for those with nice new magic suits.

All together now...



“I’m entirely in favour of preserving Scots Gaelic. It’s part of our heritage. But not to the extent of nearly thirty million pounds a year.** That money would be far better spent on our hard-pressed health service or some of our crumbling school buildings. Gaelic is only one of a number languages to have been spoken in Scotland by the way; the Scots language in particular, precursor to Modern Scots, has as strong a heritage as Gaelic but receives less than one hundredth of the financial support given to what was effectively an Irish import. The Zealocrats spend all that money on Gaelic to try and *differentiate* us from the rest of the UK. As a process it sanctions the tyranny of the minority.”

– Helen McInnes, General Secretary, SLAP (the Scottish Language Assessment Panel)

CAST AND CREW

Culloden II

Action, Historical, Drama - **Spellmac Films**

Director: C A Syzygy

Writers: Manton Spellar, Gillam Rüss, Florian Meck

Stars: Ramp Tadgett, Erica Dopp, Errol Pow

Cast

(principals)

Ramp Tadgett	...Colonel Jed (Jedburgh) McEchearn
Errol Pow	...Major Bennet Dunbar
Erica Dopp	...Lady Anne Mackintosh
Reg Pantalone	...Sergeant Gerry Rinaldi
Kat Malmudie	...Intelligence Officer Forozan Foley

Pascal Krenn	...Capitaine Marc le Cheminant
Hamish T Salata	...‘CSM’ Katsuo Minamoto
Eric Snapcock	...Lieutenant Mick Underwood
Buddy Barr-Dodd	...Prince Charles Edward Stuart
Heft Munro	...Lord George Murray
George Curdwinkle	...William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland
Declan O’Declan	...Sir John O’Sullivan
Leonard Corsody	...Lieutenant General Henry Hawley
Arthur Littlehitch	...Corporal George Underwood
Ronald Puddicles	...Alasdair McGillivray
Reuben Pompo	...Professor Arthur Connery
Ralph ‘Rotors’ Barfit	...Helicopter Pilot
Chas Bendyboye	...Helicopter Co-pilot
(named other)	
Caz Legerdemain	...Marquis d’Eguilles
Walter Numthrups	...Brigade Major James Wolfe
Hamilton Cran	...David Wemyss, Lord Elcho
Findo Gask	...Donald Cameron of Lochiel
Henry McDoodle	...John Campbell, Duke of Argyll
Lowther McQueen	...Archibald McKenzie, Moy Hall Steward
Deirdre Birchwood, Granola Moon, Wendy Licking, Gloria Clap-a-Turtle, Archie Bubb, Lewis Harris	...Moy Hall servants
Finnegan the Smelly	...Himself

Producers

Manton Spellar, Jock Quimby, Guillermo Molinaro ...**Producers**

Hepton Gast, Elgin Safridi, Kirsten Focks ...**Executive Producers**
(Hepton Gast is the principal of Gast & Galloper PLC, investment bankers)

Music

Milos Künt

Cinematography

Johnston Bimblynook, BSC

Editing

Jimmy Natto

Art Direction

Peter Gutta-Percha

Makeup Department

Angel Blush, Peachy Ramirez

Sound Department

Basil Doofangly

Costume and Wardrobe Department

Hizzy Boovering

Dialogue Coach

Pukka Pikkapakkapikkelpekkapeppa

Special Effects

Amos Drann

Key Grip

Harry Micklewhite

Best Boy

Billy Boots

Stunts

Banter Whiff, Gusto Yapp, Horst Brätwurst, Wristy Flint, Biffo Wheelnut

Legal

Gavin Chunderloch, Donald Spewan (Chunderloch & Spewan WS)

Production Accountant

Meniscus Grip, CA

Security

Jack Gila, Little Tommy Holt

Catering

Hamilton Bustre (Terracotta Restaurants Group)

Spiritual Adviser

The Bishop of Strelsau

Secretarial

Olivia Jet3

Note on Spellmac Films

Founded by Manton Spellar, ably assisted by Gilliam Rüss and Florian Meck, Spellmac's films have made money since their first tentative venture, a claustrophobic thriller, *'The Bearsden Variation'*. Starring Kat Malmudie and Errol Pow, it rekindled interest among a bored Scottish cineasty and was short-listed for a Golden Bustard at the Lodz Film Festival.

Then came, *'Marsupial Nights'*, a violent romance built around two teenage pregnancies, followed quickly by its even more violent sequel, *'Lark Blue'*, telling of the brutal gang formed by the two girls concerned. Members had to be under sixteen and pregnant. There were no other criteria. On reaching sixteen or giving birth, whichever came first, membership had to be relinquished. No exceptions.

Those three films were followed by the, arguably much more controversial, *'Burka Lite'*, a multiculturally-driven Jacobean tragedy. The formidable Erica Dopp played both the doomed female protagonist and the ghost of her vengeful, androgynous lover.

'Elegantly perverted' and *'Cinematic cocaine'*, were among the various descriptors used by critics in their almost universal praise. Such luminaries included the influential Michael Pitmiddle of the pop-up blog, *'A Stripped Thread'* and Whinnia Stoag of the online weekly, *'They Always Forget Brad Dexter.'*

Spellmac has been moving from strength to strength. '*Culloden II*' is its most ambitious project yet. Spellar wants it to be their first big budget, Hollywood-style movie, '*a bloody great pile of profit,*' as he put it in a recent interview.

Time will tell.



“I heard some spotty, teenage boy on television saying that here in Scotland we’re different to Britain, because we’re more helpful towards each other, we’re more equal and we’re more inclusive. Tell you what son, away down to Jakey O’s Bar of a Friday night and give them a lecture about inclusiveness. It’ll be an interesting experience for you. Don’t get taken in by bullshit. Human nature doesn’t change just because you cross a border.”

– Johnny Duffus, Chief Social Work Officer, West Duninver Council

A LUNCH

“Put lustre from your mind,” Hamilton Bustre would say to anyone asking him about the pronunciation of his surname.

“Think Notre, as in Dame, then add an ‘o’ to give you Nootre. Add an ‘s’ before the ‘t’ and say ‘Noostre’, before changing the ‘N’ to a ‘B’. And there you have it.”

He was a tall man, with a head of rich, russet-coloured hair which he oiled and combed straight back. Beneath that lurked a face a like a koala bear’s.

‘Terracotta’ was the name of his restaurant chain. And, with the help of funds in the form of convertible preferred shares from Hepton Gast’s investment bank, Gast & Galloper – Marcel Galloper had long gone to his grave – Bustre had opened nine restaurants in under three years. Now he was planning his first English outlet.

His formula was simple. Provide rich but modern-looking surroundings – fittings by Olegans & Peppmuth – and a slightly exotic menu. Pre-prepare all the food at a central point. Ensure

the restaurant freezers were always well stocked with it. Using banks of powerful microwaves, defrost the meals fast then heat quickly and carefully. *Design* the food on the plate to a pre-set pattern. And, importantly, ensure the plates were never too hot, thus the food may not seem to have been microwaved.

You never heard the warning, “Take care. The plates are very hot,” in a Terracotta outlet. Which isn’t to say they were ever lukewarm either. Provide a decent, fairly-priced wine list, a range of unusual and over-priced bottled waters and superlative toilet facilities. Keep customers well away from the kitchens and put each restaurant manager on profit share.

Hamilton Lazère Fantouche Bustre and Hepton Hadrianus Coromandel Deuteronomy Gast enjoyed a wary association. As calculating men, neither was used to entirely honest relationships though both accepted that if they did not actually like each other, there was at least a degree of mutual respect.

Bustre, whose parents had escaped to Britain as refugees from Belgium at the beginning of the second world war, had clawed his way up the catering profession tree via the kitchens of the legendary Lanchester Hotel in London, moved northwards through Gannifer Hignifalian’s eponymous bistro chain for some years, then arrived at Edinburgh’s Michelin-starred Mighty Goose chophouse, before finally opening Terracotta.

Gast was also from immigrant stock, in his case Schleswig Holstein three generations previously. He was a mathematics prodigy who made his fortune after devising a method for predicting spot shipping rates and thus the likely price of forward freight agreement derivatives, before co-founding Gast & Galloper.

The two men had been introduced at Filch & Belter's, one of the world's oldest private members' clubs, situated in a quiet wynd in the capital city's Old Town. Gast had been a member of 'Fibs' for over forty years, following in his father and grandfather's footsteps. When they met, Bustre had been there as another member's guest. He hoped fervently that Gast might put him forward for membership at some stage but dared not raise the subject.

It was the day of their monthly lunch, always in 'Terracotta One', close to the capital's Charlotte Square, the first of the chain to open and, effectively, Bustre's head office.

"Ah, Hammy," said Gast strolling over to a corner table always held for the owner. "What's for lunch?"

The banker was of average height and portly. His jolly-looking, red face belied his mercenary nature and his head was topped by thin strands of grey hair which rose from his pate in the slightest breeze like wisps of smoke from a dying fire.

Bustre rose, shook hands with his major investor and sat once more. He was much taller than the investment banker though he never felt it for reasons he had yet to fathom.

"Afternoon, Hepton. Monteverdi soup, Capering Bunnets à la Cack, Hulkies in Vests, Apple Thunderbird, then cheeses including your favourite, Reeking Scunner. A schooner of Manzanilla to start, some nice, flinty Sancerre with the main fare, then an interesting Eiswein from the Nahe valley in Rhineland-Palatinate to finish. Acceptable?"

“How on earth do you pre-prepare all that?”

“We don’t. That’s just for you and me.”

“I’d almost rather try the standard fare, you know.”

“You can do that any time you like, Hepton.”

“Yes, I suppose I can. How *is* business?”

“Your return on investment is perfectly safe,” said Bustre as their starters arrived.

“Nothing’s ever perfectly safe,” replied the banker, tucking in. “Is the English expansion plan still on schedule?”

“To the hour.”

“Good. Let’s hope Bella Snagnose and her gang don’t wreck its chances by reinforcing the Border. That would be unhelpful.

“Did you know,” he continued without missing a beat, “that without ‘*One-Eyed Jacks*’, there might well have been no spaghetti westerns as we came to know them?”

“I did *not* know that,” said Bustre.

He had learned long ago that Gast was capable of changing the subject instantly, usually by posing a question to which the restaurateur was unlikely to have the answer. The banker also regarded himself as something of a film buff.

“ ‘*A Fistful of Dollars*’ was made in 1964,” he continued, leaning forward for emphasis and spearing a slice of peach. “Clinton Eastwood’s right hand...”

“I don’t think he was ever called Clinton, Hepton.”

Gast continued undaunted.

“*Clinton* Eastwood’s right hand was severely damaged by the baddies and his character had to relearn how to draw and fire his gun in order to exact revenge.”

“Right,” said Bustre, denying a sigh the release of escape. “And is this important?”

“Yes. Of course. Because precisely the same thing had already happened to Marlon Brando in ‘*One-Eyed Jacks*’ in 1961. In that respect, ‘*Fistful*’ was derivative.”

“I see,” said Bustre. He didn’t really care. “Well it just goes to show, yet again, how little there is that’s new in this world. What do you think of your soup?”

“Very good. Unusual but good. Who came up with it?”

“I read it in a magazine. But let’s move on to the next course,” and he beckoned a waiter.

“I was thinking about Neverendum Two,” said Gast, after a short silence.

“You’re not going to vote ‘yes’, are you?” said Bustre.

“I don’t think I’ve ever told you how I intend to vote.”

“I just assumed...”

“Yes. Well, assumptions can be dangerous. But for what it’s worth, no, I can’t see any reason why I would vote ‘yes’, though I’m not entirely against the idea of independence you know. What *I am* generally opposed to is nationalism, especially the dangerous, ideological kind driven by fanatics and zealots which is what we have here in Scotland.

“In any case, if we had been going to become independent, we’d have been far better doing it in the seventies or eighties when there were vast oceans of oil sloshing around.”

“I agree Hepton. I agree. I wish they’d just leave it alone and allow everyone to get on with their lives. It’s all quite unnecessarily disruptive.”

The ‘Bunnets’ arrived.

After a few moments, the banker spoke once more.

“It’s a strange thing, though.”

“What is?”

“The way one’s hackles can still rise. I’ll tell you. I was watching a film the other night, *‘The Man Who Never Was’*. Have you ever seen it?”

“Can’t say as I have.”

“It’s very good. Made in 1956. Directed by Ronald Neame. Based on the true story of a British attempt during World War Two to trick the Nazis into weakening Sicily’s defences before the 1943 attack on that island, using a dead man’s body with faked papers. The script, from the book of the same name, was by a writer called Nigel Balchin. Well known in his day. In the film, the dead man’s father was played by the late Moultrie Kelsall. Very good Scottish actor. Remember him?”

“Nope.”

Gast sighed before continuing.

“Anyway, Lieutenant Commander Montagu, who hatched the scheme, was played by Clifton Webb.”

“Based on a true story, you say?” said Bustre.

“Yes. But here’s the thing. In the true story, the dead man with the faked up papers was a Welsh tramp called Glyndwr Michael. But in the film he was changed to a Scotsman.

“And in the film, there’s a scene where they’re standing in a mortuary, beside the covered body of the son, when Montagu asks the dead man’s father – that’s Moultrie Kelsall, the father is never named in the film – if they might use his son’s body to dupe the Nazis. The father replies that he wants to be sure that what they will be doing is good and worthy of the son.

“Montagu assures him it would be an opportunity for his son to do a great thing for England.

“The father rounds on him fiercely, telling him in no uncertain terms his son was a Scotsman and proud of it.

“Montagu sincerely begs his pardon.

“And the father replies, ‘Never mind. We’re used to that. You English always talk about England when you mean Britain.’ ”

“Ah yes. That still happens,” said Bustre.

“It does. It happens far too often. And Montagu’s initial response still irritates me, even though it was a very brief scene in a film made over sixty years ago. Funny how it touches a deep nerve,” said Gast.

“Indeed.”

“But,” the banker continued, “why do you think they changed the dead man from a Welshman to a Scotsman? It doesn’t make a blind bit of difference to the story.”

“No idea.”

“And what on earth motivated Nigel Balchin, a southern Englishman with no Scottish connections that I could ascertain, to pop that particular pointed observation into the script? Because, even though it happens to be a truism, it too still makes not a jot of difference to the story.”

“Still no idea.”

“No. So I got hold of Balchin’s biography and ploughed through it. But interesting as it was it didn’t provide an answer. Then I asked the biography’s author, Derek Collett, if he knew.”

“And?”

“Nice man and eager to help. But he didn’t.”

“A mystery then.”

“It really is. And a very odd one.”

“Right.

“Ready for the next course?”

“What? Oh yes. I suppose I am.”

◇

“The Scottish ‘remain’ vote (in the EU referendum) was *not* ‘overwhelming’ as the Scottish Government keeps insisting. Its leaders should bone up on the proper meaning of the word. One point six million Scots voted to stay in the EU but no fewer than one million voted to leave it. That’s roughly three to two. The ‘remainers’ comprise a ‘significant’ majority but by *no* means an ‘overwhelming’ one. If, say two point four million had voted to remain and two hundred thousand had voted to leave, *that* would have been ‘overwhelming’. On balance I’d rather have stayed in but that’s not the point.”

– Donald Girvan, *The Culicoides Chronicles*

AT THE LAUNDERETTE

“Tell ye what, Shaz, ah wis reasonably open-minded about it the first time. Ah wis there tae be convinced. Ah wisnae agin us gawn aff oan oor ain, ken whit ah mean? Might’ve bin a guid thing. Whit wis it they cried it if enough o’ us voted ‘aye’? A civic awakenin’?”

“Somethin’ like that.”

“But then they turned oot tae be jist anither bunch o’ bastart liars.”

“Aye well, ah did warn ye.”

“When wis that then?”

“Ah’m sure ah did, Maisie.”

“That’s some memory ye’ve got, hen.”

“Ah’m jist sayin’.”

“Onywise, they lied about the ecoanamy, an’ especially about yon oil bonus. Oil bonus ma fantoozie. There wis nae fuckin’ oil bonus. Oany eedjit cin see that noo.”

“Plain as the nose.”

“An’ on top of it aw, we had yon cocky wee bantam struttin’ aboot like a chopped egg wi’ butter. Mr fuckin’ el presidente in waitin’, the wee shite.”

“Aye. He wiz awfy fu’ o’ hisself.”

“Ken who he reminded me of, Shaz?”

“Naw. Who?”

“That Jabba. Jabba the Hutt, fae Star Wars. He’s like a wee totty Jabba.”

“Aye. He is. Ye’re right enough.”

“At least he’s lost his seat, noo. Bella doesnae seem quite sae bad at furst, but she’s nae different either. Unnerneath it she’s a fanatic jist like the rest o’ them.

“An’ then there’s the fuckin’ deficit.”

“Whit is the deficit, onywise?”

“The deficit? It’s basically jist the difference atween whit the government spends and whit it gets in fae taxes an’ the like.”

“Oh right. That’s aw it is? I thought it wis mair complicated than that.”

“Naw. That’s aw it is. It’s shown as a percen’age o’ GDP.”

“Whit’s GDP, then, Maisie? Ah’m never sure.”

“Dae ye never read anythin’, Shaz?”

“Aye, ah do. But ah’ve no’ got a degree in ecoanoamics.”

“Ye dinnae *need* a degree in ecoanoamics. It’s basic.”

“Maybe tae youse, but no’ tae me.”

“Well, GDP stan’s fur Groass Doamestic Proaduct.”

“Ah ken that much.”

“Dae ye want tae know, or no’?”

“Aye, aye. Oan ye go.”

“Right. Groass Doamestic Proaduct’s the total value o’ aw the goods an’ services a country produces in a year. Ye add up the merkit value o’ aw the whisky an’ the Irn-Bru an’ the shortbread an’ the Tunnocks an’ the pies an’ Goad knows whit else. That’s aw it is.”

“Right.”

“An’ yer deficit is a percen’age o’ it. Scoatlan’s deficit’s mingin’. Worst in Europe. The Holyrood Government’s still spendin’ way fuckin’ more than it’s bringin’ in.”

“No’ verra guid then.”

“Naw. No’ verra guid at aw. An’ then there’s aw the debt.”

“That’s aw the money the government owes, eh?”

“Ye dae know somethin’ then?”

“Ah *read* it somewheres.”

“Aye, right. Onyhow, if ye look at that as a percen’age o’ GDP an’ aw, they’ll tell ye that the UK debt’s aboot eighty-five per cent. That’s aboot one point eight trullion smackeroonis. Jist aboot the wurst it’s ever been.”

“Ma Goad, that’s an awfy load o’ money. The place mus’ be aboot bankrupt’, is it naw?”

“Naw, hen. Jist as long as aw they baws are kept in the air and aw yon money keeps movin’ – that’s the main thing, keep aw the money movin’ – then naebody spots the tricks, ’cos maist o’ us are tae busy jist survivin’ the day tae day.”

“So whit’s Scoatland’s debt, then?”

“Naebody kens. They dinnae work that yin oot. Or if they dae, they dinnae tell us. But ye can bet yer tap rung o’ falsies it’s fuckin’ shite.”

“It’s bakin’ ma noodle jist thinkin’ aboot aw this.”

“Nae wonder. But if ye’ve got a deficit an’ ye want tae spend mair, ye cin only dae it by raisin’ money fae mair taxation’f some kin’ or ither, or by borrowin’ mair. But borrowin’s no’ free.”

“Ye say that, Maisie, but wi’ interest rates sae low the noo, does it no’ mak sense tae maybe borrow mair cheaply while we cin?”

“Jist leave the thinkin’ tae me, hen. In the meantime the health service’s gawn doon the pan, we hivnae goat onywhere near enough polis tae keep control o’ the place, hauf oor teachers canny teach, hauf o’ them’r aff work wi’ stress, an’ hauf’s ta’en early retirement an’ bugged aff.”

“That’s three haufs, Masie.”

“Aye, maybes, but it’s still true.”

“Fair enough.”

“An’ Shaz, whit’s aw this shite about the polis gettin’ time aff tae learn Gaelic? Mair money waistit. Whit’s that missus? Somebody’s jist cut aff yer husband’s heid an’ they’re usin’ it as a fitba’? Sorry tae hear that but we canny send oanybody the noo. They’re aw oot at their Gaelic evenin’ class. Whit a piece o’ fuckin’ noansense.”

“Maisie, whit about...”

“An’ tell me this, Shaz. How’s it we’ve got teachers noo whae canny spell and canny add up or subtract? How’s that possible, eh? Fuckin’ bampots.”

“Steady noo, Maisie.”

“Steady is it? Ma second lassie, Moira, brought wee Cammy roon’ fur his tea th’ither night. He’s nine year old and he canny even dae his nine times table. Ah could dae ma twelve times table when ah wis nine!”

“They dinnae do the twelve times table ony mair. No’ since we went decimal.”

“Dinnae be sae smart. Ye ken whit ah mean. An’ anither thing. Whit about yon, whit wis it, Sustainable Growth Commission Report? Nae wonder Bella an’ her gang buried it an’ wouldnae even talk about it at their ain coanference. All it said wis that, ecoanoamically, independence wis a waste o’ fuckin’ time.”

“How about a cup o’ tea, Maisie? Ah’ll make us wan.”

“Aye, oan ya go, then. But ah’ll tell ya this. The SZP cin stick it. Ah dinnae trust them ony mair, no’ as fawr as ah cin throw them. They’ve been in power fur ower ten year an’ things’r mair shite than when they got in.”

“Aye.”

“They sheets nearly dry yet, Shaz?”

“Jist aboot.”

“That drier’s awfy slow. Ah’ve telt Ahmed. Telt ’im and telt ’im. If he disnae dae somethin’ aboot it ah’ll show ’im whit a civic fuckin’ awakenin’ really is.”

– Maisie and Shaz, the Gartcows Washorama

ENDS

* Not the so-called ‘clan tartans of today which did not start appearing until the 19th century.

** The amount spent annually by the Scottish Government on promoting Gaelic can be found below resulting from a FOI request, (if it hasn’t been removed in order to hide the truth). The amount spent annually will have risen since that FOI request was made.

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/foi-18-01112/>

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